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April 4, 2018

The Honorable Megan Brennan
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Office
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

Postmaster General Brennan:

I request your immediate attention regarding unresolved issues surrounding the status of the "Church Hill" post office at 414 N. 25th Street in Richmond, Virginia.

The Church Hill post office abruptly closed on April 10, 2017; I wrote you on April 11 requesting that the United States Postal Service (USPS) "work on restoring access to a permanent postal location in the immediate area as quickly as safely possible," and asked to be "updated on the status of any actions being taken" to that end. Since then, my office has been closely engaged with efforts to re-open the Church Hill post office, communicating frequently with USPS, the property owner, and concerned Church Hill residents. Members of my staff have visited the site to view progress on repairs and renovations, and I myself have met with USPS officials.

Unfortunately, that close engagement has not produced satisfactory results. I understand that extensive renovations were necessary before customers and USPS workers could safely return to the Church Hill location; I further understand that USPS may have limited control over how quickly those fixes can be completed. However, I do not understand why USPS has furnished my office with seemingly contradictory answers about when the site will re-open, or why USPS has failed to meet self-imposed deadlines for providing requested clarifications or additional information.

Last September, a USPS government relations representative shared with my staff a message from Perry Lin, the manager of facilities program management at USPS headquarters. According to that message, "The Richmond VA East End station re-occupancy is estimated for mid-November."

When the post office failed to re-open in November, my staff requested an update. On December 5, Jim Cari, a USPS government relations representative, stated that “a timeframe for reopening of the East End Post Office has not been determined,” that USPS “is in the process of completing an assessment and review of repairs,” and that USPS “will work to restore operations as soon as possible.”

On January 26, I personally met with Richmond Postmaster Joseph Thekkekara and marketing manager Benjamin Farmer III to discuss, among other issues, the status of the Church Hill post office. During that meeting, I was promised that information on plans for either re-opening that post office or otherwise re-establishing full service to Richmond’s East End neighborhood would be shared with my staff by early February. Despite repeated check-ins and reminders from my staff, that information was not provided within the promised timeframe; even now, weeks later, I have yet to receive it.

Instead, on March 30—contrary to the commitment I received in our January meeting—Mr. Farmer informed my staff that “target dates [for re-opening the Church Hill post office] cannot be offered at this time due to supply constraints,” but that “as more information becomes available, we will update all concerned.”

I am extremely frustrated that today, a full year after the closure of the Church Hill post office, residents of Richmond’s East End still lack a local, permanent, full-service postal location. While a mobile unit has been present during this time period, it provides limited services; residents in need of services not offered by that unit are forced to visit another location. Those who lack access to some other mode of transportation must walk upwards of three to five miles to do so. This unacceptable situation must be resolved expeditiously.

To that end, I request your help in securing answers to the following questions:

- 1) What explains the apparent discrepancy between Mr. Lin’s statement about a November 2017 re-occupancy and USPS’ subsequent refusals to provide a target date for re-opening the Church Hill post office?
- 2) Does USPS currently intend to re-open the Church Hill post office, is it actively working toward that goal, and does it have or expect at any point to have a target date for that re-opening?

And if USPS does intend to re-open the office:

- 3) What impediments or outstanding needs currently prevent the Church Hill post office from re-opening, and is there anything my office can do to help remove such impediments or meet such needs?

Richmond residents urgently need answers to these questions, and I would appreciate any help you can provide. Please contact Elizabeth Hardin, my District Representative, with any response; she can be reached at 804-486-1840 or at Elizabeth.hardin@mail.house.gov.

As I said in my letter last year, my constituents need and deserve easy access to a permanent, full-service neighborhood post office. It is critically important that USPS re-open the Church Hill post office as quickly as responsibly possible, or provide fully equivalent service somewhere else in the immediate vicinity. I look forward to your help in resolving this matter expeditiously and restoring adequate postal services to the East End community.

Sincerely,



A. Donald McEachin

Member of Congress

CC: Richmond Postmaster Joseph Thekkekara